FREE PREVIEW

Cambridge International AS & A Level • Psychology 9990 • Paper 4

CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY · SECTION B

Planning a Study

Model answer booklet

Every consumer **plan-a-study** question from the 2024–2026 papers and the specimen paper, answered in full and annotated.

June 2026 · Mar 2026 · Nov 2025 · June 2025 · Mar 2025 · Nov 2024 · June 2024 · Mar 2024 · Specimen 2024

14 Full-mark model answers

327 Annotations showing what earns marks

(a)(b)(c) Every part of every question

★ Examiner tips and mistakes to avoid

Design a study packs for all four options

Clinical · Consumer · Health · Organisational

PAPER 4 · SECTION B · CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY

The plan-a-study question is worth 24 marks. This pack shows you how to earn every one.

Every Consumer Psychology plan-a-study question from 2024 to 2026, plus the specimen paper, answered in full and annotated mark by mark.

14	77	327	4
questions	pages	annotations	options available

14
Every question, 2024 to 2026

All 14 Consumer plan-a-study questions, every variant, plus the specimen paper. The most recent paper comes first, including March 2026.

a·b·c
Full answers to every part

Complete plans, psychological knowledge and justified choices, written in full, the way an A* student writes in the exam.

327
Annotations that show the marks

Colour-coded comments point to exactly where each method feature, ethical guideline and reliability step earns credit.

2/2
(c) answers built for both marks

Every (c) answer shows the general point and the applied point that turns one mark into two.

NEW
A guide before you start

Two new pages up front: what each research method needs, and the principles behind a strong plan. Syllabus terms only.

★
Examiner tips and traps

Every question flags the mistakes that cost candidates marks, so you avoid them on the day.

> Most students know the research methods. What they lack is a clear picture of what a **full-mark plan** looks like. Each answer here gives you that picture, then shows you **why** each sentence earns its place.

Jyotika Varmani
Cambridge A Level Psychology teacher and subject expert. Her blog is cited in the official Cambridge teachers' manual.

Get the full pack →

NEW IN EVERY PACK

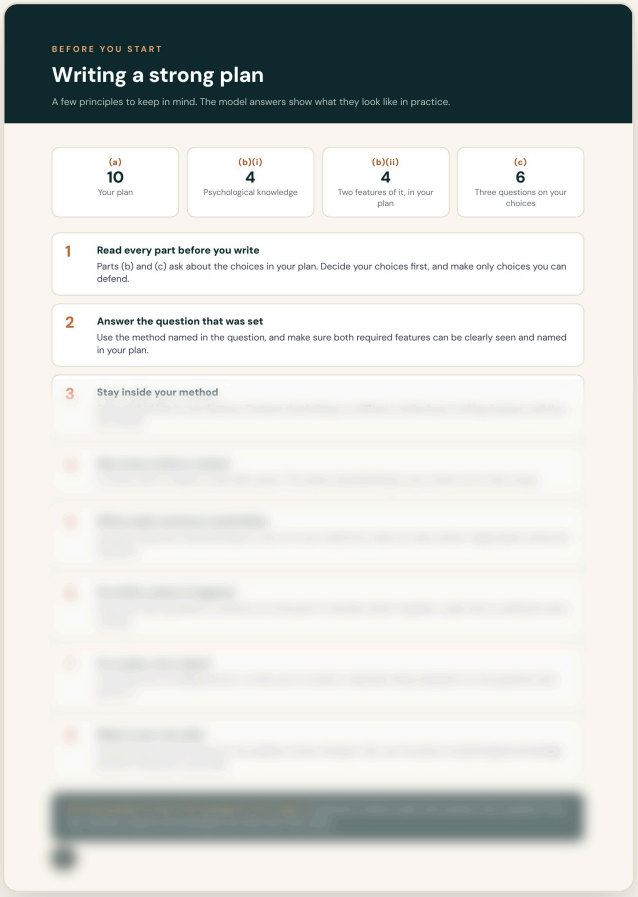
Before you start: a two-page guide

Before the first model answer, two pages set out the standard every plan is marked against. Here is a glimpse.



What every plan needs

The general features, then the features of each of the seven methods, side by side.



Writing a strong plan

How the 24 marks are shared, and eight principles behind a strong plan.

METHOD CARDS IN THE GUIDE

Experiment · Questionnaire · Interview · Observation · Longitudinal study · Case study · Correlation

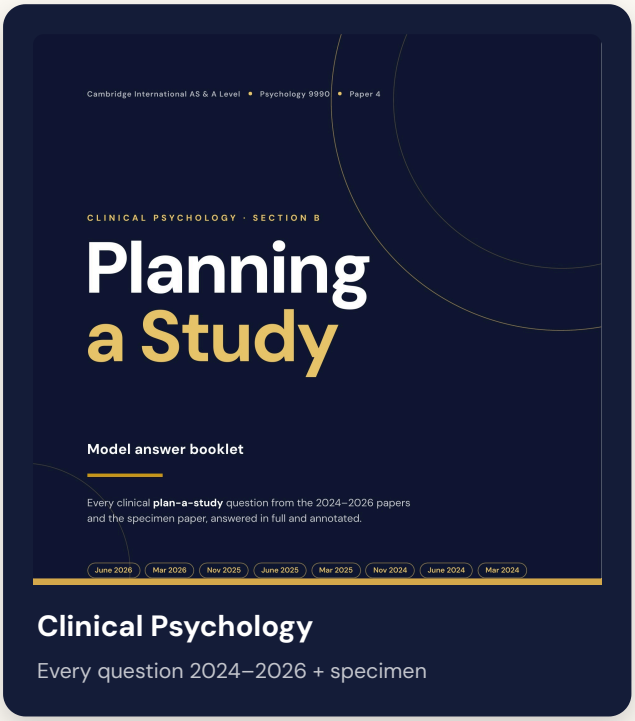
The full guide is in the pack. Every method card and all eight principles, at the front of the booklet.

Unlock →

ONE SERIES · FOUR OPTIONS

Design a study packs are available for all four options

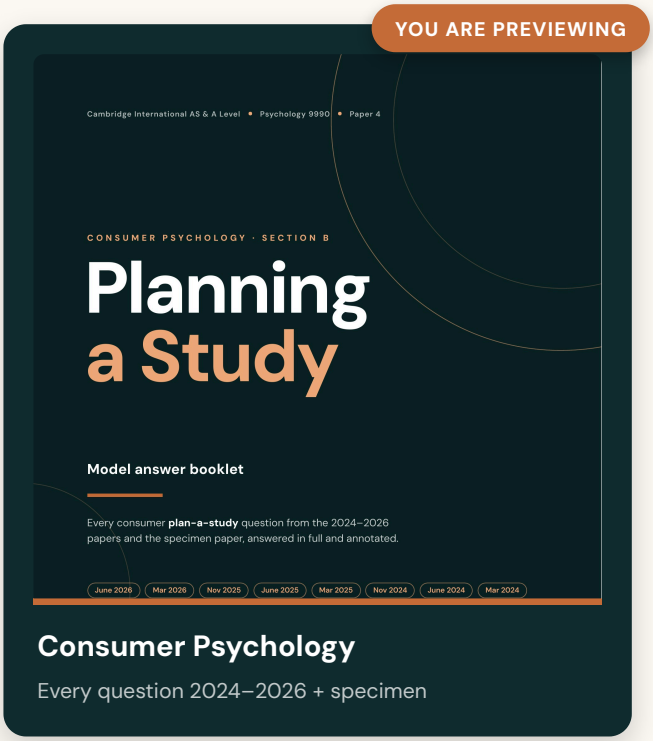
Whichever two options you are sitting, the same full-mark approach is waiting for you. Every pack covers every plan-a-study question from 2024 to 2026 and the specimen paper.



Clinical Psychology

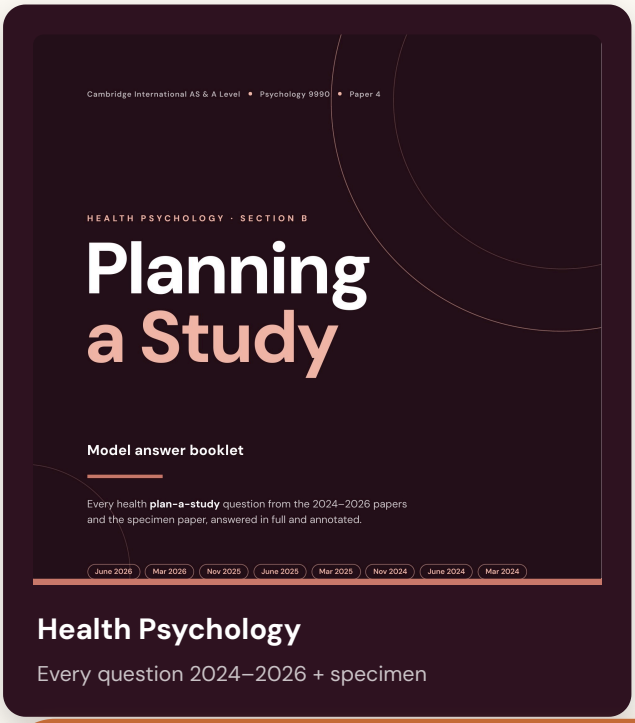
Every question 2024–2026 + specimen

YOU ARE PREVIEWING



Consumer Psychology

Every question 2024–2026 + specimen



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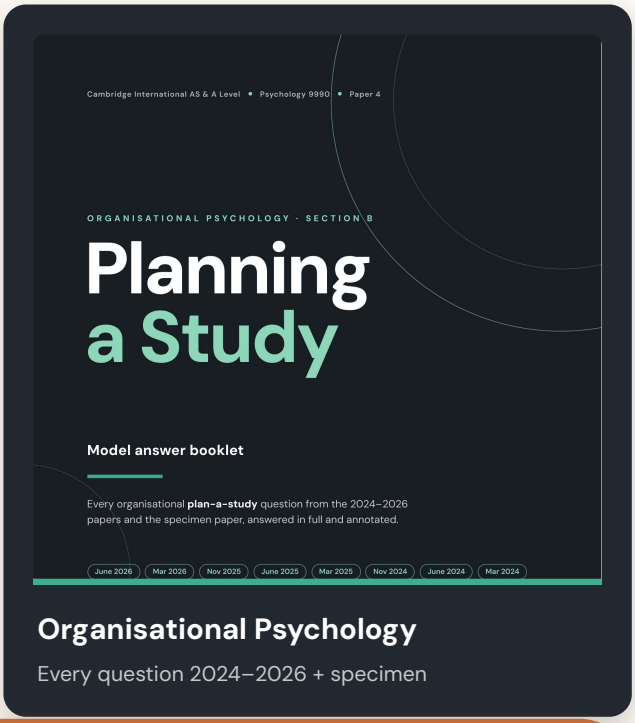
Every question 2024–2026 + specimen



Organisational Psychology

Every question 2024–2026 + specimen

See all four packs in the store →

CONTENTS OF THE FULL PACK

14 questions. Here is what you can see today.

In this preview · Sneak peek · In the full pack

★	New Before you start	What every plan needs · Writing a strong plan Two-page guide	2	Sneak peek pp. 2–3
01	June 2026 Paper 41 & 43	Personal space in a bus ticket queue Naturalistic observation	5	In this preview pp. 5–10, partly locked
02	June 2026 Paper 42	Gender and reasons for store choice Face-to-face interview	11	Full pack
03	March 2026 Paper 42	Decision strategies for buying clothes online Online questionnaire	16	Full pack
04	November 2025 Paper 41 & 43	Classical music in different restaurants Field experiment	21	Sneak peek p. 22
05	November 2025 Paper 42	Gender and brand recognition Experiment	26	Full pack
06	June 2025 Paper 41 & 43	Food names and menu choice Field experiment	31	Full pack
07	June 2025 Paper 42	Background noise and taste at a market Interview	36	Full pack
08	March 2025 Paper 42	Suggestive selling in a supermarket Experiment	41	Full pack
09	November 2024 Paper 41 & 43	Multiple unit pricing Closed questionnaire	46	Full pack
10	November 2024 Paper 42	The explorer shopper Postal questionnaire	51	Full pack
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12	June 2024 Paper 42	The disrupt-then-reframe technique Face-to-face interview	61	Sneak peek p. 64
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14	Specimen 2024 Paper 4	Odours in a retail environment Experiment	71	Full pack

Page numbers refer to the full pack. Tap a locked row to go to the store.

01

June 2026 · Paper 41 & 43 · Question 10

Personal space in a bus ticket queue

SYLLABUS 2.2 The psychological environment · 2.2.3 Consumer behaviour and personal space

Naturalistic observation

The question

Plan a study using a naturalistic observation to investigate personal space distances between people of different ages queueing to buy a bus ticket.

Your plan must include details about:

behavioural categories | analysis of data

a	The plan	10 marks	6
b	Psychological knowledge	8 marks	9
c	Explaining your choices	6 marks	10

Preview · full pack p. 5

The plan

10 marks

(a) Plan a study using a naturalistic observation to investigate personal space distances between people of different ages queueing to buy a bus ticket. **10 marks**

Your plan must include details about:

- **behavioural categories**
- **analysis of data**

The aim is to find out whether the distance people leave between themselves and the person in front of them in a queue changes with age. Age is judged from appearance [1], so anyone the observers cannot clearly place in an age group is not recorded, which keeps the data accurate.

This will be a **naturalistic observation** [2] at the ticket office of the main bus station in Leeds, because people queue there every day in a normal way. It is **covert** and **non-participant** [3]. Two observers sit on a bench 5 metres away and look as if they are waiting for a bus, so the queue is not affected by being watched.

[1] VALIDITY Unclear ages are left out, so the data stay **accurate**.

[2] OBSERVATION TYPE **Naturalistic**: a real queue at a real ticket office.

[3] OBSERVATION TYPE **Covert** and **non-participant**: observers look like passengers, so queuing stays natural.

Preview · full pack p. 6

The participants are everyone who joins the queue between 7 and 9 am and 4 and 6 pm on five weekdays, so this is an **opportunity sample** 4. I expect around 300 people. Peak times are chosen so that queues are long enough for gaps to form. Each person's age group is estimated as 18 to 30, 31 to 59 or 60 and over. People with children, luggage trolleys or wheelchairs are not recorded 5, because these change the space they need.

Before the study, the floor in front of the ticket window is marked with small, neutral floor tiles that are already 30 cm wide, so the observers can count tiles to judge distance without anything being added to the floor. The **behavioural categories** 6 use Hall's zones: intimate distance (less than 45 cm, under 1.5 tiles), personal distance (45 cm to 1.2 m, 1.5 to 4 tiles) and social distance (more than 1.2 m, over 4 tiles). Each time a person stops in the queue, the gap in front of them is recorded in the category, along with their age group.

4 **SAMPLING TECHNIQUE** **Opportunity**: everyone who joins the queue at peak times.

5 **SAMPLE** Removes people whose space needs are **different**, so age is the key variable.

6 **BEHAVIOURAL CATEGORIES** ★ Hall's three zones, each defined by a number of **floor tiles**.

The rest of this plan is in the full pack

Including the sampling, the ethics and how the conclusion is reached, with every annotation.

Unlock the full pack →

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Partly locked · full pack p. 7

b Psychological knowledge

8 marks

(b)(i) For one piece of psychological knowledge on which your plan is based, describe this psychological knowledge. — 4 marks

Hall (1966) [15] described four zones of personal space: intimate (up to about 45 cm), personal (45 cm to 1.2 m), social (1.2 to 3.6 m) and public (beyond 3.6 m) [16]. Which zone we use depends on the relationship. The intimate zone is for partners and close family, the personal zone is for friends, and the social zone is for strangers and people we do business with. When a stranger enters a closer zone, people feel **uncomfortable** [17] and try to restore the space, such as by turning away or stepping back. Zones also differ between cultures.

15 THEORY Names the researcher behind the **zones**.

16 THEORY All four zones, with **distances**.

17 THEORY What happens when a zone is **entered**.

(b)(ii) [redacted]

See how both features link to the plan

Part (b)(ii) for every question, each feature linked directly to the plan.

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Partly locked · full pack p. 9

C

June 2026 · Paper 41 & 43 · Question 10

Explaining your choices

6 marks

(c)(i) Explain one reason for your choice of behavioural categories. 2 marks

I chose categories based on Hall's zones because they turn distance into **clear groups** 20. In my study, a gap of two tiles is always "personal distance" 21, so both observers record the same thing.

20 1ST MARK The general reason: categories are **clear**.

21 2ND MARK Applied: a real tile measurement.

Part (c), built for both marks

Every (c) answer shows the general point and the applied point, side by side.

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a

November 2025 · Paper 41 & 43 · Question 10

The plan

10 marks

(a) Plan a field experiment to investigate the effect on spending when playing classical music in different types of restaurant. 10 marks

Your plan must include details about:

- controls
- a directional or non-directional hypothesis

The aim is to find out whether classical music increases spending in two different types of restaurant. My hypothesis is **directional** [1]: "Customers will spend significantly more per person when classical music is played than when no music is played, in both a fast-food restaurant and a fine

restaurant

[1] HYPOTHESIS ★ **Directional**, because North found classical music **raised** spending.

13 more questions like this

Field experiments, interviews, questionnaires and observations, all annotated.

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b

June 2024 · Paper 42 · Question 10

Psychological knowledge

8 marks

(b)(i) For one piece of psychological knowledge on which your plan is based, describe this psychological knowledge. — 4 marks

Kardes et al. (2007) 14 tested the **disrupt-then-reframe** technique in a field experiment on a university campus in the Netherlands. A researcher asked students to join a student interest group for half a year. In the disrupt-then-reframe condition, the price was given in a confusing way, as "300 eurocents" 15, then, after a pause, it was reframed: "That's 3 euros. That's a really small investment!" In the control condition, students simply heard "3 euros". More students joined after the disrupt-then-reframe pitch. St[illegible] completed

14 THEORY Names the study and **where** it was done.

15 THEORY The confusing **price**, then the reframe.

Psychological knowledge, done properly

One piece of knowledge per answer, with two features linked straight into the plan.

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